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- Today's Insider (PDF)



YOU DON'T SAY...

"We were in favor of it, it passed here, and we could use the money."

Chowan County manager Kevin Howard, on the possibility of losing tax revenue due to the proposed moratorium on wind farming.

THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 7/05/17

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News Summary

Wind Farms

Two proposed wind farms will pull out of eastern North Carolina if an 18-month moratorium on wind farm permits becomes state law, company officials say. Both projects had been expected to apply for state permits as early as this year and potentially could have been generating electricity by 2019. But the moratorium means no wind farm could receive a state permit before Dec. 31, 2018. The moratorium was inserted last week into an unrelated energy bill, House Bill 589, and now awaits Gov. Roy Cooper's signature or veto; Cooper has until July 30 to decide and is reviewing the bill, according to his office.

The moratorium was added during closed-door negotiations without public debate. Officials in the two counties where the farms were to be built are worried about the potential loss of tax revenue from the projects if they don't go forward. The bill has also rattled wind developers because it's

just the latest attempt by lawmakers in districts with military bases to slow down wind farm development. A previous proposal in April called for a 30-mile buffer between wind farms and military installations.

The 18-month moratorium was initially brought up in the Senate as a four-year ban but scaled back as a compromise; it would require a study to identify areas of the state where wind turbines would interfere with military training. Wind farms must already receive clearance from the Department of Defense as well as the Federal Aviation Administration before they can be built. One of the affected wind farms, the Timbermill Wind project, is proposed in Chowan County with 48 turbines up to 599 feet in height to the tip of the extended blade. Project developer Apex Clean Energy has been paying lease payments since 2013 to property owners who will host the turbines on their land when they are built. Apex CEO Mark Goodwin, in an email statement, said the moratorium "jeopardizes hundreds of millions of dollars of investment in rural economies." "An 18-month delay coupled with the near certainty of additional red tape means we will almost certainly have to suspend Timbermill Wind if House Bill 589 becomes law," the statement said. The other project, the Little Alligator wind farm, would erect 29 turbine towers in Tyrrell County, all on land owned by timber producer Weyerhaeuser. The developer, British energy firm Renewable Energy Systems, or RES, is now reconsidering its commitment to the \$200 million energy project. The moratorium measure "has sent a strong and broad message that the State is not favorable for wind energy investment," RES said in an emailed statement. "It raises serious questions that must be clarified about the Legislature's long term intention, before development investments can continue."

The moratorium was added to legislation that otherwise enjoyed widespread support because it would allow North Carolina residents to lease solar panels on their rooftops rather than owning them outright, erasing a significant financial barrier for homeowners who want solar panels but can't afford to buy them.

Rep. John Szoka, R-Cumberland, the sponsor of House Bill 589, said the benefits of his legislation for promoting solar energy and reducing energy costs outweigh any problems caused by the moratorium. "Every bill has good things and not so good things in it," Szoka said. "I certainly hope the Governor doesn't veto it." Szoka, a retired Army lieutenant colonel from Fayetteville, has said in the past that restrictions on wind farms are ill-conceived as it is highly unlikely for the U.S. Department of Defense to allow wind farms to be built in areas where they would endanger training fighter pilots.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Brown, R-Onslow, the author of the moratorium, has unsuccessfully proposed previous wind farm restrictions that were rejected by lawmakers. Brown, who could not be reached for comment, has said his concerns about wind farms are based on private conversations with military officials.

The Timbermill Wind farm would generate about \$800,000 in property tax revenue for Chowan County in its first year of operation, an 8.5 percent increase in county property tax. In subsequent years the wind farm would depreciate in value and generate less property tax.

Tyrrell County attorney and county manager, David Clegg, said ongoing attempts by lawmakers to stymie wind farms raises questions as to whether the 18-month moratorium could be extended by the legislature. That element of uncertainty makes it difficult for energy developers to plan long-term projects and attract investment, he said. Clegg said Tyrrell County is in need of economic development, noting that land values fell by 14 percent in the most recent reevaluation, which required a property tax increase to make up for the loss.

"I see the N.C. Department of Commerce sending out press releases saying something's gone to Wake, something's gone to Mecklenburg," Clegg said. "Well, you have now taken away the ability of that press release saying something's gone to Tyrrell." (John Murawski, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 7/05/17).

Declining Populations

Resources: [UNC Population Center Report](#)

While some parts of the state have grown in the past six years, a large portion of North Carolina is declining, according to data from the UNC Carolina Population Center. Of the state's 553 municipalities, 225 -- or about 41 percent -- saw population decline in 2010-16. Another 192 towns and cities saw growth lower than 6.4 percent over that time. Three of every four North

Carolina municipalities have lost population or grown slower than the state since 2010. And the northeastern part of the state has been hit hardest.

The top 10 towns with the greatest decline in 2010-16 are in Bertie, Northampton and Washington counties.

Jacksonville has seen the greatest decline in the number of people, dropping from 70,145 in 2010 to 67,784 in 2016 -- a growth rate of -3.4 percent and a loss of more than 2,300 people, according to the U.S. Census.

Jacksonville is followed by Rocky Mount, Kinston, Elizabeth City, Roanoke Rapids, Havelock, Laurinburg, Reidsville, Rockingham and Tarboro.

Lewiston Woodville in Bertie County has seen the greatest decline in population percentage, going from 549 in 2010 to 494 in 2016 -- a 10 percent drop -- followed by Conway, Garysburg, Woodland, Gaston, Aulander, Seaboard, Roper, Askewville and Kelford, according to the U.S. Census.

Projections for Bertie, Northampton, Jones and Washington counties show that further population decline is imminent. According to U.S. Census data on components of change from 2010 to 2016, each of these counties demonstrated negative natural growth or natural decrease -- where deaths outnumber births -- and showed people leaving the counties. This pattern has occurred each year since the last 10-year census.

The trouble for those counties doesn't end there. The population decline in those areas will only increase, according to the census, because each contains a large elderly population. About 23 percent of Northampton County is 65 or older, followed by 22 percent in Washington County, 20 percent in Jones County and 19 percent in Bertie County. By comparison, only 16 percent of the population overall in North Carolina is 65 or older.

It's hard to tell who is moving out of those counties, though, according to the population center, but historic trends for those counties show most people who leave are young, working-age individuals who may be searching for better economic opportunities. But that trend will only speed the decline in those areas, as people of childbearing age move away and choose not to start families in those areas. (Abbie Bennett, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 7/05/17).

Mental Health Cuts

Leaders of a regional mental health agency say the state's new spending plan leaves them without enough money to open a crisis center in Raleigh. Alliance Behavioral Healthcare will get \$19 million from the state this year, said spokesman Doug Fuller. That's \$4.9 million less than it received last year. The organization had planned to open a 16-bed facility for adults in the next nine months at a site it is renovating off of Tryon Road. But now the group has to re-evaluate its plans, said Alliance CEO Rob Robinson.

"Construction was underway," Robinson said. "This was in an effort to reduce unnecessary (emergency department) admissions and the number of people in jail." Mental health advocates say Wake County has lacked the proper resources to help patients with mental health disorders since the state shuttered Dorothea Dix psychiatric hospital near downtown Raleigh in 2010.

A state report recently showed the county needs at least 43 new inpatient beds to treat people with mental illnesses, Robinson said.

Alliance, which is one of seven regional healthcare management organizations in North Carolina, still plans to move forward with a crisis center in Fuquay-Varina for children ages 18 and younger. The group spends Medicaid, state and county money to purchase mental health treatment for patients in Wake, Durham, Johnston and Cumberland counties.

Under the new state budget, regional organizations are instructed to spend money they have in reserves to make up for the drop in funding. They "have almost a billion dollars sitting in reserve accounts that are not being spent on community mental health services," said Shelly Carver, a spokeswoman for Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger.

Gov. Roy Cooper's spending plan also recommended reducing funding to the organizations, Carver said. She also said money that would have gone to the regional offices was redirected to other mental health services, including \$2 million for a case management program in Wake County that Alliance will help manage. "This should send a clear signal to (regional healthcare management organizations) that state dollars should not be sitting on the sidelines, but should either be

returned to taxpayers or spent on their core mission of providing mental health services as intended," Carver said.

The cuts come shortly after the state auditor found that management group Cardinal Innovations Healthcare Solutions paid its CEOs \$1.2 million more than the law allowed and spent money on parties, alcohol, first-class airline tickets and other luxuries. State lawmakers decried the salaries and spending.

In Wake, officials say they will look for other ways to fund local mental health services. County Commissioner Greg Ford, who serves on Alliance's board of directors, said the situation is particularly frustrating because the group already spent money to buy the facility in Raleigh. "It's the equivalent of building a school but not having the money to pay for the teachers," Ford said.(Paul A Specht, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 7/05/17).

Election Canvass

Included in the budget technical corrections bill -- House Bill 528 -- is a small provision that would give the executive director of the Bipartisan State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement the ability to shorten the canvass period for the 2017 elections in order to "ensure orderly elections on election schedule otherwise required by law." The director would then have to give at least two weeks' notice to the county boards and the public. The change would only apply to elections this year and would expire on Nov. 7, 2017. The provision was sponsored by then-Sen. Andrew Brock (R-Davie), who said the current canvass schedule might cause problems for elections officials when primaries and general elections are held in rapid succession.(Lauren Horsch, THE INSIDER, 7/06/17).

Sunday Morning Alcohol

Some North Carolina local governments are stepping up to the bar quickly to start Sunday morning alcohol sales after North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper signed legislation late last week authorizing such action. The Raleigh City Council voted Wednesday for an ordinance giving Alcoholic Beverage Control permit holders in the city limits the ability to serve drinks at 10 a.m., instead of noon currently. "I think I got more inquiries about that than anything else on the agenda," Raleigh Mayor Nancy McFarlane told the council Wednesday.

Carrboro's Board of Aldermen passed a similar ordinance Monday. The changes by the two municipalities start this weekend. Cooper signed the bill presented by legislators granting the option to any municipal or county government with permit holders to vote for the earlier sales start. Backers of the change say letting brunch-goers and vacationers buy and drink alcohol on Sunday mornings will be good for business and tourism.

Meanwhile, Charlotte Mayor Jennifer Roberts said Wednesday that the Charlotte City Council could vote on the "Brunch Bill" July 24, allowing its changes to take effect July 30. "I'm a big advocate of putting it on our agenda as soon as possible to help our business community," Roberts said.

In Charlotte, the change would be welcomed by restaurants as well as their customers. "There's tremendous support," said Charlotte Chamber President Bob Morgan. "Clearly the hospitality industry is for it. My sense is that the support is quite strong."

Roberts said the city will follow protocol and have the council's economic development committee consider it at its July 13 meeting. The council's next scheduled business meeting is July 24, a Monday.

That would mean the first Sunday the new law could take effect is July 30. That's before the PGA Championship runs at Quail Hollow Country Club Aug. 7-13 and before the Panthers' first Sunday afternoon home game on Sept. 17.

Republican council member Kenny Smith urged city officials to make the change in a Sunday email. "The PGA Championship will place an international spotlight on Charlotte and provide our small businesses ample opportunity to dramatically increase their sales," he wrote. "I can think of no way to better cap off the week than to ensure our restaurants can offer a complete brunch experience before the final round of the championship."

Fayetteville Mayor Nat Robertson hopes to legalize Sunday morning alcohol sales in the city by Sept. 1, he said on Wednesday. "It's common sense to me," Robertson said.(Jim Morrill, THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER, Paul Woolverton, THE FAYETTEVILLE OBSERVER, and THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, 7/05/17).

Middle-Class Wages

The collapse of middle-class jobs since the turn of the 21st Century has been worse in North Carolina than the rest of the country, a university economist says in an upcoming book forecasting the state's future.

While the number of middle-class jobs rose by 6 percent nationwide between 2001 and 2015, there were 5 percent fewer in North Carolina, North Carolina State University's Michael Walden found. Meanwhile, high- and low-paying jobs each increased in North Carolina by more than 25 percent, up to three times faster than the rest of the country, he said Wednesday.

The economic pressure on the middle class is helping pull apart social cooperation because as jobs paying a middle-class wage disappear, people see less chance of getting ahead, Walden said.

"Clearly, what's been happening to our economy, 'the hollowing-out' as well as other things, has political implications," Walden said.

More than two dozen communities from Morehead City to Boone have seen middle-class jobs paying between \$45,000 and \$69,000 decline during the period Walden studied. The effect was worst in the Asheville, Charlotte, Wilmington and Winston-Salem areas and across 20 rural counties in the state's mountains and western Piedmont.

A key reason is the greater reliance of mountain and western Piedmont areas on textile and apparel manufacturing, which have largely been boarded up in recent decades, Walden said. "The studies that have been done in North Carolina of people who have lost jobs, particularly who have lost jobs in the textile and apparel industries, show that they don't get retrained, they don't get reskilled. They end up taking lower-paying jobs than they had," Walden said in an interview.

And while North Carolina workers saw their per capita incomes climb throughout the 20th Century toward the national average, those wages compared to the rest of the country have fallen back to levels seen in the early 1980s, Walden found.

Walden's research is further indication that improving unemployment rates mask the fact that in many communities there are too few jobs paying enough to support a family, said Maureen Berner, who teaches municipal officials about public administration at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's School of Government. The stress also has shown up through an annual, double-digit growth in need for food distributed by non-profits like churches and food banks, which usually require proof of income and resources, she said.

The findings also could help explain why even though while several economic indicators improved during former Republican Gov. Pat McCrory's term, his re-election campaign last year seeking credit for a "Carolina Comeback" didn't fully catch on with voters. "The 'Carolina Comeback' discussion occurred in a political context, with Republicans taking credit for policies that appeared to boost North Carolina's economic growth in recent years," said John Hood, a political commentator and president of the conservative John William Pope Foundation. "Walden's work should remind everyone that most of the causal factors for North Carolina's economic performance over the past few decades are either external to state government or not fully understood." (Emery P. Dalesio, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, 7/05/17).

Special Prosecutors

A provision in the annual budget corrections bill -- House Bill 528 -- would establish a special prosecutor pilot project for the Council of State. The project would give the Administrative Office of the Courts -- after consulting the Conference of District Attorneys -- the ability to appoint up to two special prosecutors per Council of State member. The Council of State member would need to request the prosecutor to help a local district attorney's office on certain cases, including insurance fraud. The special prosecutors would be agency attorneys already working in the department of the requesting Council of State member. The special prosecutors would have a physical office in the district attorney's office during the appointment time. The special prosecutors would report to the director of the AOC or a designee. The project would not allow outside counsel to be hired. The results of the project will have to be presented to a legislative oversight committee by April 1, 2018. During Senate debate on the provision, some Democrats voiced concerns that the special prosecutors should be tied to the attorney general's office. (Lauren Horsch, THE INSIDER, 7/06/17).

Duke Lawsuit

Duke University is facing yet another lawsuit that alleges it mishandled a rape case. Filed originally in state court and moved to federal court just before the Independence Day holiday, the new case alleges that a graduate student faced harassment and retaliation from university officials after telling them she'd been raped by the live-in boyfriend of a Duke Women's Center counselor who works with victims of gender violence.

Represented by Durham-based lawyer Bob Ekstrand, the graduate student's claims the boyfriend told her he'd subsequently used the counselor's "access privileges" at Duke to look up information about her, and that he and the counselor had worked with other people at Duke to "prevent any investigation" of his conduct. Eventually, she was "placed on academic probation," removed "from her curricular activities" and "falsely accused" of stalking the counselor, the suit alleges.

The lawsuit wound up in federal court at Duke's request because it claims the university violated the graduate student's civil rights.

Duke officials aren't commenting on the matter, with Vice President for Public Affairs and Government Relations Michael Schoenfeld invoking the university's custom of "declin[ing] to comment on pending litigation."

The case is among at least four lawsuits pending against Duke, in federal and state courts, that question its handling of sexual-misconduct complaints. (Ray Gronberg, THE DURHAM-HERALD SUN, 7/05/17).

Moving On

Shaw University President Tashni-Ann Dubroy has resigned for a new position at Howard University, where she will be executive vice president and chief operating officer. Dubroy, an entrepreneur and chemist, was only 34 when she was named president of her alma mater two years ago. She rekindled fundraising at the historically black university in downtown Raleigh and ushered in the first enrollment increase at Shaw in six years.

"We sincerely thank Dr. Dubroy for a remarkable tenure of service to Shaw University," Joe Bell, Shaw board chairman, said in a statement Wednesday. "We are proud of her energetic, inclusive and refreshing leadership and the manner in which she led our institution to surpass goals in student enrollment, fundraising and cost control. We wish her all the best in the next phase of her professional journey."

Though Dubroy will go from a presidency to a second-in-command position, she will move to one of the nation's most lauded historically black campuses. Howard is a private university in Washington with 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students, a law school and a medical school. Dubroy, a fiscal conservative, was seen as catalyst for a turnaround of Shaw's finances, which had suffered because of a steady enrollment decline in recent years. She modernized processes and re-instituted raises for employees. She hired a new leadership team and changed scholarship allocations, a controversial move that prompted protests early in her tenure.

"This was one of the most difficult decisions of my professional life," Dubroy said in a news release. "I am honored that Shaw University's Board of Trustees entrusted me with the opportunity to lead my Alma Mater. I will always be grateful to Shaw University where I honed my leadership capabilities and expertise in my capacity as its 17th President. I envision the successes that our faculty, staff and I achieved together will continue to support Shaw's forward motion into a strong and vibrant future. I look forward to using these treasured experiences in my new role at Howard University." (Jane Stancill, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 7/05/17).

Novant Suits

Novant Health Inc. is being counter-sued by two insurers in a dispute over the insurers' financial responsibility in the system's settlement of an employee class-action lawsuit. Novant agreed in September to pay \$32 million, including \$10.7 million in attorney fees, to settle a March 2014 lawsuit filed by six current and former employees. The employees include Karolyn Kruger, a retired doctor who served as chief of staff at Thomasville Medical Center. Each named plaintiff received \$25,000.

According to the plaintiffs' law firm of Schlichter, Bogard & Denton, there were about 25,000 affected Novant employees who had been enrolled automatically in the retirement plan since 2009. The lawsuit covered the period Oct. 1, 1998, to Sept. 30, 2015, and had 70,683 potential beneficiaries.

The complaint accuses Novant of breaching its fiduciary duties by causing plan participants to pay millions of dollars in fees for excessive record-keeping and administrative services to third-party service providers Great West Life & Annuity Insurance Co. and Winston-Salem brokerage firm D.L. Davis & Co.

In the settlement, Novant agreed to conduct a comprehensive request for proposal competitive bidding process led by an outside consultant; hire an independent consultant to assess its 401(k) plans on an annual basis for four years; revise investment options as needed; remove Davis from any involvement in the plans; not offer any Mass Mutual investments in the plans; not offer any brokerage services; and provide accurate communications to beneficiaries.

Although Novant did not admit or deny liability, it said the settlement "is in the best long-term interests of our health system and our retirement plan participants."

The current litigation began April 25 when Novant sued Federal Insurance Co. Inc., known by the Chubb brand, and Travelers Casualty and Surety Co. of America in Forsyth Superior Court. The lawsuit was moved to federal court June 8.

Novant said its legal representation in the employee class-action lawsuit -- Morgan Lewis, appointed by Chubb -- estimated the total legal exposure could have ranged from \$46 million to \$86 million, and that a settlement of up to \$35 million "would be reasonable."

Novant claims its financial exposure was \$7 million after insurance coverage.(Richard Craver, WINSTON-SALEM JOURNAL, 7/05/17).

Raleigh Bishop

Bishop Luis Rafael Zarama of Colombia, an auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Atlanta, has been appointed by Pope Francis as the new bishop of the Diocese of Raleigh. Zarama, 58, will become the sixth bishop of the Diocese of Raleigh when he is installed at the new Holy Name of Jesus Cathedral on Aug. 29, according to an announcement Wednesday by the apostolic nuncio to the United States. The Raleigh vacancy was created when Pope Francis appointed Bishop Michael Burbidge, who had led the Raleigh Diocese since 2006, as bishop of the Diocese of Arlington, Va., last year.

Zarama was born in Pasto, Colombia. He has been an auxiliary bishop in Atlanta since 2009. He was ordained a priest for the Archdiocese of Atlanta in 1993. His Raleigh appointment was announced Wednesday in Washington by Archbishop Christophe Pierre, apostolic nuncio to the United States, according to the Catholic News Service.

"The Holy Father has chosen well even though his decision takes a deeply beloved brother and friend from our midst," Archbishop Wilton D. Gregory of Atlanta said in a statement Wednesday morning.

Zarama's installment will come five weeks after the dedication of the Holy Name of Jesus Cathedral at 715 Nazareth Street in Raleigh, scheduled for July 26.(Eric Frederick, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 7/05/17).

CMS Leadership

Two days after being sworn in as Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools superintendent, Clayton Wilcox released salaries and talked about his plans for top staff. He's bumping up pay significantly for some jobs, creating a new "culinary manager" post for his chief of staff's husband and offsetting administrative costs by scaling down some jobs, he says. The school board approved the first handful of contracts for Wilcox's administration in April, with several more voted on at a special meeting Monday where Wilcox was sworn in. The district didn't release details of the second batch until Wednesday afternoon.

Some of the biggest bumps have come for employees Wilcox recruited from his former district in Hagerstown, Md., which is about one-seventh the size of CMS. Wilcox said Wednesday he's recruiting people who will help him thrive here, with missions that range from improving educational technology to making healthy school lunches taste better.

In April, CMS hired Laura Francisco as Wilcox's chief of staff at \$175,000 a year, with a four-year term. That's \$40,585 more than Ernest Winston made as former Superintendent Ann Clark's chief of staff. Wilcox said Wednesday he saw Francisco as crucial to his success and needed to entice her to move.

On Monday, the board also approved hiring Francisco's husband, Jody Francisco, for a new job as manager of culinary development in the department of community engagement at \$85,000 a year. On Monday and in the first news release sent out Wednesday, Jody Francisco was described as manager of community engagement. A manager's job would not normally require board approval, but policy requires the board to sign off on hiring family of top executives.

Wilcox said Jody Francisco's job will include making cafeterias more responsive to students with special dietary needs, working with school gardens, developing partnerships that promote healthy eating and working to make school food taste better within federal health guidelines. Jody Francisco, a former chef, worked in food services at the Maryland district. "He can wear a lot of different hats," Wilcox said.

Wilcox says he expects some to say he created a job for Laura Francisco's husband, but says the position is one he'd have created anyway. "I'm trying to respond to what the community's asked us to do," he said. The child nutrition department, which actually runs the cafeterias, will remain separate from Jody Francisco's department.

Wilcox himself comes in at a higher pay level than his predecessor. In January the board approved his four-year contract at a base salary of \$280,000, with the chance to earn a performance bonus of up to 10 percent. Clark's salary was about \$270,000, without the bonus option. (Ann Doss Helms, THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER, 7/05/17).

Farmer's Health

Farmers are some of the biggest gamblers. It's a high-stress job that demands a lot from an individual. In the agricultural industry, there is an increased risk for ailments such as heat exhaustion, skin cancer, injury and respiratory disease. So, the North Carolina Agromedicine Institute, headquartered at East Carolina University, is reminding farmers that they are their number one asset. "We need to change the perception to make sure you are taking care of yourself, because if not, there may not be a farm," AgroSafe nurse Jessica Wilburn told a group of farmers during a farm safety class last week.

There about 48,000 farmers in North Carolina and staff with the various Agromedicine programs reached about 9,000 last year. Because North Carolina farmers, fishermen and loggers tend to be more concerned about their commodities than their own health and safety, the institute's staff provide safety classes. AgroSafe nurses travel to farm meetings, conferences or to individual farms to conduct free on-site health screenings.

"Farmers don't routinely go to the doctor or get preventive care," said Robin Tutor, director of the Agromedicine Institute. "[One of these screenings] might be the first time they know that they have high blood pressure or diabetes. We help get them into care and teach them how to manage their disease in their work environment." Tutor said about 60 percent of the farmers they have come in contact with have high blood pressure or obesity.

The institute was founded about 30 years ago by physicians at N.C. State University, East Carolina University and North Carolina A&T. The institute also has a research component and relies on university staff and interested college students to help conduct their agricultural health-related studies.

Currently, a major focus for the institute is fighting respiratory disease among farmers and forestry workers. Tutor said it's the number one disease in the agricultural community. Each year, there are between 1,800 and 3,000 "preventable occupational incidents involving pesticide exposure" in the agricultural and forestry industries throughout the United States, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. (Taylor Knopf, NC HEALTH NEWS, 7/04/17).

RDU Flights

In the last year, five airlines have added new flights from Raleigh-Durham International Airport, including trips to four new nonstop destinations -- Paris, New Orleans, Austin, Texas, and soon San Juan, Puerto Rico. RDU officials want to use this momentum to attract more airlines and flights to the Triangle, setting new and ambitious goals for the airport's future. Those goals include direct connections to places like San Diego, Kansas City, Mo., South America and China, which would add to RDU's list of 48 nonstop destinations once Allegiant Air kicks off its twice-weekly flights to San Juan in December.

"All of the routes that we've seen out of RDU have done pretty well," said Kristen Schilling-Gonzales, Allegiant's director of planning. "We've seen some pretty strong bookings most recently on the San Juan flight." While RDU officials have been working to attract a nonstop flight to San Juan for a couple years, a new incentive program the Airport Authority put in place in April helped seal the deal. Allegiant will receive marketing assistance and waived landing fees for one year. Airlines that add international flights and new airlines that come to RDU also can benefit from the incentives program.(Kathryn Trogdon, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 7/05/17).

Drone Zones

The North Carolina Department of Transportation has issued a reminder about drone flying guidelines as drones continue to cause safety concerns across the country. There are DOT rules and Federal Aviation Administration laws about where people can and can't fly. As drone sales soar, the big concern is novice operators who put lives in danger by not following the law. There are 19,000 registered drones in North Carolina, making airspace increasingly crowded. "One of the biggest challenges is that drone operators are often unaware of all the rules, both at the federal level and at the state level," said Basil Yap with the NCDOT. As drone sales soar, NCDOT reminds pilots: Obey the law

Last month, a Charlotte police helicopter took evasive action at 110 mph to miss a drone near the city's minor league baseball park. "Had the drone struck the helicopter at that speed, that could have been a catastrophic event," said helicopter pilot Cody Brown.

Also last month: an American Airlines flight spotted a drone within 1.5 miles of Charlotte Douglas International Airport, despite a five-mile restricted zone around the facility.

Recreational drone users must always fly below an altitude of 400 feet and may not fly within five miles of an airport or near emergency response efforts or other aircraft. Recreational drones may not weigh more than 55 pounds, and night flying is not recommended, even if a drone is equipped with lights.

Anybody flying a drone for non-recreational use must obtain a permit from the North Carolina Division of Aviation.(WRAL NEWS, 7/05/17).

Deaths

Bishop Frank Summerfield, founder and senior pastor of one of Southeast Raleigh's most prominent churches, has died. He was 67. His passing Sunday was announced on the website of Word of God Fellowship at 3000 Rock Quarry Road, where he had been a pastor for 22 years. The website did not report a cause of death.

In addition to being the church's founder, the tall, affable clergyman also helped establish on the church grounds a daycare center and the Word of God Academy, which is best-known for producing basketball players. They include former N.C. State University standout C.J. Leslie and former University of Kentucky basketball player John Wall, the top-rated point guard in the high school class of 2009 and now an all-NBA star with the Washington Wizards. Summerfield was described on the church website as "a devoted husband, father, bishop, friend, mentor and great community leader."

Summerfield also was determined. In 2006, Word of God was one of 25 schools that the NCAA refused to accept transcripts from in its crackdown of "diploma mills," according to a 2008 story by ESPN.com. Summerfield upped the GPA requirement for athletes from the private school state from a recommended 2.0 to a 2.4.

He is survived by his wife and co-pastor, Lady JoeNell Summerfield, and their four children, Frank Jr, Mitchell, Joshua and Valisha.(Thomasi McDonald, THE NEWS & OBSERVER, 7/05/17).

UFO House

One of North Carolina's craziest coastal tourist attractions -- the so called "Frisco UFO" house -- has inspired a social media campaign in response to speculation that Dare County officials want the silver flying saucer torn down or moved. The one-time home is in the Frisco community of the Outer Banks, and has become nationally known as one of the oddities tourists see when driving up the state's coastline. Dare County officials say the hubbub is all a misunderstanding. But a petition on Change.org has so far gotten 3,000 signatures from people demanding county commissioners

desist in their efforts to force the ship's owner to be in "compliance with bureaucratic (zoning) requirements."

Dare County Planning Department Director Donna Creef told the Outer Banks website HatterasDesigns.Net that it's a matter of whether the space ship can be occupied by humans. "The structure doesn't meet any building codes or fire codes," Creef told the website. "We haven't told (the owner) that he needs to move it, or that it needs to be demolished...The UFO can stay at its current site, so long as it is closed off and people are not allowed to enter."(Mark Price, THE CHARLOTTE OBSERVER, 7/05/17).

Williams-Sonoma Expansion

A company that makes furniture for Williams-Sonoma Inc. plans to expand in Catawba County, creating 72 new jobs in Claremont. Sutter Street Manufacturing produces upholstered furniture for Williams-Sonoma brands including Pottery Barn and West Elm. The company will invest \$1.9 million in its existing North Carolina plant to grow operations, according to a release from Gov. Roy Cooper's office. The manufacturer will receive a \$300,000 grant from the One North Carolina Fund. Officials say the new jobs will pay an average annual wage of \$39,780.(WINSTON-SALEM JOURNAL, 7/05/17).

Legislative Studies and Meetings

Items in **Bold** are new listings.

LB: Legislative Building

LOB: Legislative Office Building.

More Information: <http://ncleg.net/LegislativeCalendar/>

Thursday, Aug. 3

- Noon | House convenes in session.
- Noon | Senate convenes in session.

N.C. Government Meetings and Hearings

Items in **BOLD** are new listings.

Thursday, July 6

- 9 a.m. | The Economic Investment Committee meets, N.C. Commerce Executive Board Room located on the fourth floor, 301 N. Wilmington St., Raleigh.
- 9 a.m. | The N.C. Board of Funeral Service Technology Committee meets, 1033 Wade Avenue, Suite 108, Raleigh.
- 10 a.m. | The NC Alarm Systems Licensing Board meets via conference call. The meeting originates at 3301 Industrial Drive - Suite 104, Raleigh. Contact: Michelle.Moore@ncdps.gov. To join meeting: [415-655-0002](tel:415-655-0002) Access code 733 586 585.

Monday, July 10

- 3 p.m. | The UNC Campus Security Committee: Subcommittee on Training Guidance meets, Conference Room C, Spangler Building, Chapel Hill. Contact: Josh Ellis, [919-962-4629](tel:919-962-4629).

Tuesday, July 11

- 8 a.m. | The NC Board of Funeral Service Traineeship Committee meets, 1033 Wade Avenue, Suite 108, Raleigh.

- 8:30 a.m. | The state Board of Examiners of Plumbing, Heating & Fire Sprinkler Contractors Formal Hearing meets, 1109 Dresser Ct., Board Room, Raleigh.
- CANCELLED - 8:30 a.m. | The Fund Development and Communications Committee of The North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. meets, 1100 Wake Forest Road, Raleigh. Contact: Yvonne Huntley, [919-821-9573](tel:919-821-9573).
- 9 a.m. | The N.C. Commission for Public Health hold public hearing on proposed rule changes, Cardinal Room, 5605 Six Forks Road, Raleigh.
- 9 a.m. | The N.C. Council of State meets, Commission Room 5034, Fifth floor of the Administration Building, 116 West Jones St., Raleigh.
- 9 a.m. | The N.C. Board of Pharmacy meets, 6015 Farrington Road, Board Room Suite 201, Chapel Hill.
- 9 a.m. | The state Board of Funeral Service meets, 1033 Wade Avenue, Suite 108, Raleigh.
- 10 a.m. | The N.C. Coastal Resources Commission Variance meets (if necessary), DCM Regional Offices, Wilmington.
- 11 a.m. | The UNC Campus Security Committee: Subcommittee on Data Collection Protocol meets, Conference Room B, Spangler Building, Chapel Hill. Contact: Josh Ellis, [919-962-4629](tel:919-962-4629).
- 2:30 p.m. | The N.C. Local Government Commission meets, 3200 Atlantic Ave., Longleaf Building, Raleigh.

Wednesday, July 12

- 9 a.m. | The state Consumer and Family Advisory Committee of DHHS meets, Biggs Dr., Raleigh.
- 9 a.m. | Environmental Management Commission meets, Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.
- 12 p.m. | The UNC Campus Security Committee: Subcommittee on Security Training Conference meets, Conference Room B, Spangler Building, Chapel Hill. Contact: Josh Ellis, [919-962-4629](tel:919-962-4629).

Thursday, July 13

- 9 a.m. | Environmental Management Commission meets, Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.

Friday, July 14

- 9 a.m. | The N.C. Board of Architecture hold public hearing on proposed rule changes, 127 W. Hargett St., #304, Raleigh.

Monday, July 17

- 11 a.m. | The Executive Committee of The North Carolina Partnership for Children meets, 1100 Wake Forest Road, Raleigh. Contact: Yvonne Huntley, [919-821-9573](tel:919-821-9573).

Tuesday, July 18

- 1:30 p.m. | The Accountability Committee of The North Carolina Partnership for Children meets, 1100 Wake Forest Road, Raleigh. Contact: Yvonne Huntley, [919-821-9573](tel:919-821-9573).

Thursday, July 20

- 10 a.m. | The N.C. Rules Review Commission meets, Administrative Hearings office, Rules Review Commission Room, 1711 New Hope Church Road, Raleigh.

Tuesday, July 25

- 9 a.m. | The N.C. Code Officials Qualification Board holds public hearing on proposed rule changes, 1st Floor Hearing Room, Room 131 (Albemarle Building), 325 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.
- 1 p.m. | The Board Development Committee of The North Carolina Partnership for Children meets, 1100 Wake Forest Road, Raleigh. Contact: Yvonne Huntley, [919-821-9573](tel:919-821-9573).

Thursday, July 27

- 9 a.m. | The NC Wildlife Resources Commission meets, WRC Centennial Campus, 1751 Varsity Dr., Raleigh.

Monday, July 31

- 12 p.m. | The N.C. State Board of Elections hold public hearing on proposed rule changes, State Board of Elections Office, 441 N. Harrington St., Raleigh.

Thursday, Aug. 3

- TBD | The Golden LEAF Foundation's board meets, TBD. Contact: Jenny Tinklepaugh, [888-684-8404](tel:888-684-8404).

Wednesday, Aug. 16

- 10:30 a.m. | The Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission holds public hearing on proposed rule changes, Wake Technical Community College-Public Safety Training Center, 321 Chapanoke Road, Raleigh.

Thursday, Aug. 17

- 10 a.m. | The N.C. Rules Review Commission meets, Administrative Hearings office, Rules Review Commission Room, 1711 New Hope Church Road, Raleigh.

Wednesday, Sept. 13

- 9 a.m. | Environmental Management Commission meets, Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.

Thursday, Sept. 14

- 9 a.m. | Environmental Management Commission meets, Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.

Thursday, Sept. 21

- 10 a.m. | The N.C. Rules Review Commission meets, Administrative Hearings office, Rules Review Commission Room, 1711 New Hope Church Road, Raleigh.

Thursday, Sept. 28

- 10:30 a.m. | The Standard Commercial Fishing License Eligibility Board to the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries meets, N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries' Wilmington District Office, 127 North Cardinal Dr. Extension, Wilmington.

Thursday, Oct. 5

- TBD | The Golden LEAF Foundation's board meets, TBD. Contact: Jenny Tinklepaugh, [888-684-8404](#).
- TBD | The NC Wildlife Resources Commission meets, WRC Centennial Campus, 1751 Varsity Dr., Raleigh.

Thursday, Oct. 19

- 10 a.m. | The N.C. Rules Review Commission meets, Administrative Hearings office, Rules Review Commission Room, 1711 New Hope Church Road, Raleigh.

Wednesday, Nov. 8

- 9 a.m. | Environmental Management Commission meets, Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.

Thursday, Nov. 9

- 9 a.m. | Environmental Management Commission meets, Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.

Thursday, Nov. 16

- 10 a.m. | The N.C. Rules Review Commission meets, Administrative Hearings office, Rules Review Commission Room, 1711 New Hope Church Road, Raleigh.

Thursday, Dec. 7

- TBD | The Golden LEAF Foundation's board meets, TBD. Contact: Jenny Tinklepaugh, [888-684-8404](#).
- TBD | The NC Wildlife Resources Commission meets, 1751 Varsity Dr., Raleigh.

Thursday, Dec. 21

- 10 a.m. | The N.C. Rules Review Commission meets, Administrative Hearings office, Rules Review Commission Room, 1711 New Hope Church Road, Raleigh.

Wednesday, Jan. 10

- 9 a.m. | Environmental Management Commission meets, Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.

Thursday, Jan. 11

- 9 a.m. | Environmental Management Commission meets, Ground Floor Hearing Room, Archdale Building, 512 N. Salisbury St., Raleigh.

N.C. Dept. of Environmental Quality

The N.C. Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources has a new name - the N.C. Dept. of Environmental Quality. More Information: <http://portal.ncdenr.org/web/guest/home>

Tuesday, July 18

- **6 p.m. | The N.C. Division of Water Resources hold public meeting on Atlantic Coast Pipeline Water Quality Certification, Fayetteville Technical Community College Cumberland Hall Auditorium at 2201 Hull Rd., Fayetteville.**

Thursday, July 20

- **6 p.m. | The N.C. Division of Water Resources hold public meeting on Atlantic Coast Pipeline Water Quality Certification, Nash Community College Brown Auditorium at 522 N. Old Carriage Road, Rocky Mount.**

Thursday, Aug. 3

- **2 p.m. | The state Department on Air Quality holds public hearing concerning incorporation of 2015 Ozone Ambient Standard and Readoption, 2145 Suttle Ave., Charlotte.**

N.C. Utilities Commission Hearing Schedule

Dobbs Building
430 North Salisbury Street
Raleigh, North Carolina

More Information: <http://www.ncuc.commerce.state.nc.us/activities/activit.htm>

Monday, July 10

- Staff Conference

Tuesday, July 11

- 9:30 a.m. | T-4635 Sub 0 ...Application For Certificate of Exemption to Transport Household Goods, Dobbs - Commission Hearing Room, 2nd floor, Room 2115.

Monday, July 17

- Staff Conference

Monday, July 24

- Staff Conference

Monday, July 31

- Staff Conference

UNC Board of Governors

Board Room of the UNC Center for School Leadership Development
140 Friday Center Drive, Chapel Hill (**remote meeting locations in BOLD**)
More Information: <https://www.northcarolina.edu/bog/schedule.php>

Friday, July 14

- TBA | UNC Asheville, Asheville.

Friday, Sept. 8

- TBA | The UNC Board of Governors, C.S.L.D. Building, Chapel Hill.

Friday, Nov. 3

- TBA | The UNC Board of Governors, C.S.L.D. Building, Chapel Hill.

Friday, Dec. 15

- TBA | The UNC Board of Governors, C.S.L.D. Building, Chapel Hill.

Friday, Jan. 26, 2018

- TBA | The UNC Board of Governors, C.S.L.D. Building, Chapel Hill.

Friday, March 23, 2018

- TBA | UNC Wilmington, Wilmington.

Friday, May 25, 2018

- TBA | The UNC Board of Governors, C.S.L.D. Building, Chapel Hill.

Other Meetings and Events of Interest

Items in **BOLD** are new listings.

Thursday, July 6

- **10 a.m. | Gov. Roy Cooper makes jobs announcement, N.C. State Capitol, Old House Chamber, 1 E Edenton St., Raleigh.**

Sunday, July 30

- TBD | The NC Bankers Association host 81st Annual NC School of Banking, William & Ida Friday Center, UNC-Chapel Hill. The conference concludes on Aug. 4.

Friday, Sept. 8

- No Time Given | The 77th Annual National Folk Festival opens in Downtown Greensboro for its third year in the state. Contact: Kaitlin Smith, [336-373-7523](tel:336-373-7523), ext 246.

Sunday, Sept. 24

- TBD | The NC Bankers Association hold Young Bankers Conference, Crowne Plaza Asheville Resort, Asheville.

Wednesday, Oct. 11

- 10 a.m. | The Carolinas Air Pollution Control Association hold Technical Workshop and Forum, Hilton Myrtle Beach Resort, 10000 Beach Club Dr., Myrtle Beach.

Monday, Nov. 6

- TBD | The NC Bankers Association hold Women in Banking Conference, Renaissance Charlotte Southpark, 5501 Carnegie Blvd., Charlotte.

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